

Rehett Butler

9/25/71

Dear Jim,

Your letter of letter of the 20th, could not be better. I had come to the end of a chapter in editing some old work, had worked cleaning up our road front for winter until winded, then got the mail as the rural carrier came, and yours is the only letter requiring answer, so before returning to work I'll answer it in haste.

Frankly, I had forgotten your offer of the use of your Long Beach home. Because at some point I'd like to resume my N.O. investigations, I wonder if InterState 10 has been completed to the point where the travel-time is not now too great? Or if it is secure enough should I be able to accept your offer, for longer, weekend-long, perhaps, interviews? Should it be possible, there are some I'd like to be able to conduct in this depth. Possibility also includes my having enough time, should I get there and should I be able to get a car, which I'd not be able to rent. Last time I did it down there and for only two days and a 200-mile trip, it cost me over \$50.

Sorry you didn't get RATE-UP from me. We send them out the day we get the order. And handle and pay postage and insurance for only 50¢ adwed.

You may have an important point in Rehett Butler's having made a separate tape. I think I heard of this before, possibly from you. You are correct in all details in your appraisal of Butler, but you may underestimate a bit. I have no proof, no more than a suspicion, but I think he also finked for the State UnAmerican committee in racial matters. I have met some left-winger who say he hung out with them prior to his right-wing public identification, prior to INCA days. Which really means just before Oswald's reappearance, I'd estimate. They never kept their promise to search them recollections and fill me in.

There could be legitimate reasons for having Rehett make a separate tape, one being editing and another in part what you suspect and in part a continuing dialogue after the taping of the show. However, whatever the reason, your hunch is worth following and could produce worthwhile information, the one question, aside from their willingness to tell you, being their willingness or perhaps ability to tell the truth. In the one confrontation I had with him, I did get Butler to admit he is a liar. I would add nonstop liar. He makes things up as he goes as they seem likely to be what he'd like to be true.

I've forgotten which of the records I have. I believe it is the L.W.A. one. I also have, I believe, the unedited tape of the show. I'd probably have trouble finding it now. And I recall and think I discussed in O IN NO the hassle over the post-assassination debates record and a suit over one.

Is it possible he and Oswald talked before the show? Probable, the question being the length of time. Not unusual at all. Most people do not get to stations at the last minute. I do not recall anyone considering the possibilities that Rehett's tape might hold, but with Butler not having used it, I'd suspect that either it is, as he sees it, of no value, or, if he just forgot and they listen when you ask, they'll not give and may misuse themselves. I'd not worry about the latter possibility were I you. I'd try for it.

I'd seen the Boggs quote before. Others had the Commission idea, including a DC radio station, which aired it. It was one of the obvious alternatives. Fortas seems to have handled this for LBJ.

I think it is OSWALD SPEAKS that I have. I'd ignore almost anything from Bood, who is no more dependable on political matters than Butler. However, there is no doubt about three things: Butler did appear before Dodd's Committee, it has not published (and will not release) his "testimony", and no copies in the Warren Commission files. One of the more likely possibilities is that it is too terrible, for Butler knew nothing, and what he might have imagined might have terrified everyone. In writing a blurb, aside from his political bias, Dodd could just have made an honest mistake. But it is interesting that B was reminded of Van Der Lubbe, which I'd forgotten.

Your interpretation of the Reichstag-fire affair is essentially correct, but it was not part of an anti-Hitler plot.

If I do not have the leaflet in which Butler claims to have been called before the Warren Commission, I'd appreciate a copy. I'd then ask for the reports or transcript, which I think would show he lied, not existing. The trip was before the WC was appointed, unless there was a second one. In fact, the FBI seems to have paid remarkably scant attention to B. I have seen nothing to indicate they got any tape from him. I recall Arnesto Rodriguez and Stuckey as acknowledged sources from SS files and I suspect the FBI got it immediately from WDSU, as soon as it was aired if not after taping.

It is possible to take jacketblubs too literally. They are frequently made up by artists who know little about the content. Hence there is the possibility that ref. to the House Foreign Affairs Committee and to an "interview" could be innocent exaggerations. But I doubt very much if Butler did not arrange this trip. I think it was his ticket to what for him is fame and he used it every way he could.

On the two possibilities with Mrs. B, asking for the DeHart tape and his SIS testimony, good idea. And the money they owe you might help. You could ask them to apply that to the cost and bill you for the rest. I see no possibility she could be less truthful than Butler. I think this better than writing to him. If she is unproductive, you might then take it up with him. So, to answer your question, you are not off the track and I don't know anyone who looked into the Rhett tape. I wouldn't worry about "tipping him off" about anything. Let me evaluate any response for you. Nor do I know of any proof that he and LHO met on any other occasion. It is not impossible, but I have no reason to suspect it. ...How do you know Gil got CIA \$\$\$?...In those days, most INCA \$\$\$ from Ochsner...Butler should have known about the camps before the 7/31/63 raid because they had been reorped, including by Stuckey...I do not believe "that Butler knew about and/or supported the plans for the assassination".

There are possibilities in following up leads on Butler that, in every interest, I should not alert you to. I don't want you to be in the position of going out and looking for things to establish my concept of a possibility. This is not the way to investigate at this juncture. It would be much better if what I believe possible came out all by itself, without your conscious digging. I have ample reason to believe the possibility can be the fact. It would not be hurtful to Butler were it true.

Guess that's all for now. Again thanks and good luck.

Best,